

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Polo School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2005-2006**

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Dates of On Site Visit: January 23, 2006

Date of Report: February 3, 2006

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
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General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Surveys
- LEA flow through funds request information
- Comprehensive plan

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the district does not have a student placed in private schools or facilities. The district uses data-based decision-making procedures to review and analyze school district-levels to determine if the district is making progress toward the state's performance goals and indicators. Suspension/expulsion procedures meet the requirements of the state and federal guidelines and all personnel are licensed or certified.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded the preschool screening notice needs to be put in "The Miller Press". The district needs to ensure referral documentation is included in student files. The district needs to provide training for teachers and paraprofessionals and invite parents to attend the training.

Validation Results

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as needing improvement under general supervision as identified by the steering committee.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Numbers of children screened

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the Polo School District 29-2 provides a free appropriate public education to all eligible children with disabilities. No students have been suspended or expelled.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement under free appropriate public education as identified by the steering committee.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Teacher file reviews
- Surveys

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the Polo School District 29-2 ensures the proper identification of students with disabilities through the evaluation process.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded the district needs to ensure that all parts of the prior notice/consent for evaluation forms are completed correctly. An in-service or functional assessment is needed by district staff and functional evaluation needs to be consistently conducted as part of the evaluation process. Parents need to provide input into the evaluation process.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under appropriate evaluation as identified by the steering committee.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees the district needs to ensure that prior notice and consent is provided at the required times and that the notice is completed correctly. The district needs to consistently document parental input into the evaluation process.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:25:04 Evaluation procedures

School districts shall ensure, at a minimum, that evaluation procedures include the following:

- (5) A variety of assessment tools and strategies are used to gather relevant functional and development information about the child, including information provided by the parents that may assist in determining:
 - (a) Whether the child is a child with a disability; and
 - (b) The content of the child's IEP.
- (7) The child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, as applicable, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities;

Through interview and a review of student records, functional assessment was not available for two of three files reviewed. Consent was acquired to conduct academic testing as part of one student's reevaluation; however, tests were not administered in this area.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Teacher file reviews
- Surveys

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the Polo School District 29-2 ensures parents have been fully informed, in their native language, of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought. District policies and procedures are appropriate for responding to complaint and due process issues. Parents are provided with the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records of their child.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded parental rights information was not included with every prior notice. The district needs to maintain a list of individuals who would serve as a surrogate parents if needed. All files need to have a types/locations document.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee. Types and locations of other student records were available in all student files.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees the district needs to ensure parental rights are provided at initial referral and annually thereafter. A list of individuals who could serve as a surrogate parent needs to be maintained by the district.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Teacher file reviews

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the IEP team is comprised of appropriate team membership and meets all identified responsibilities. Policies and procedures are in place to ensure an appropriate IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible student. The IEP team plans for post school activities.

Needs Improvement:

The steering committee concluded Polo School District 29-2 needs to ensure parents receive five day prior written notice for IEP meetings. Present levels of performance need to link to functional assessment.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under individual education program as concluded by the steering committee. The district has provided written notice five days prior to the schedule meeting date.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program

Each student's individualized education program shall include:

- (1) A statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance.

ARSD 24:05:25:04 Evaluation procedures

School districts shall ensure, at a minimum, that evaluation procedures include the following:

- (5) A variety of assessment tools and strategies are used to gather relevant functional and development information about the child, including information provided by the parents that may assist in determining:
 - (a) Whether the child is a child with a disability; and
 - (b) The content of the child's IEP.

ARSD 24:05:27:13.02. Transition services. Transition services are a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability, designed within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student with a disability to facilitate the student's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

Through a review of students files the following issues were noted:

Student #1- The present levels of performance did not contain the strengths and needs in the area of transition. This student graduated and the IEP only contained a justification statement indicating no services were needed. Math appeared to be the area of disability however, there were no strength and weaknesses documented in the present levels of performance from which to develop an appropriate program.

Student #2- Reevaluation for this student occurred in September 2005. There was no evidence of functional assessment. A transition checklist was completed at the time of the reevaluation. The information from the checklist was not summarized into a written report for parents nor were transition strength and needs developed and included in the present levels of performance. A goal was developed to explore three Vo-Tech schools. The service plan did not recommend any services. This student was eligible for special education service under the areas of written expression and reading. Generic information was available in the present levels of performance for written expression, for example, "has difficulty with spelling and capitalization rules." There was no strength, weakness or goal in the area of reading. The main concern regarding this student is that the present levels of performance were not updated following the September 2005 evaluation. Parent and teacher input that was omitted in the 2004 IEP was added to the 2005 IEP. All remaining content was outdated and inaccurate information that duplicated the present level information of the 2004 IEP.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- File reviews

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the Polo School District 29-2 provides children with services in the least restrictive environment

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under least restrictive environment as concluded by the steering committee.